

1999–2000 CATS ASSESSMENT

Open-Response Item Scoring Worksheet

Grade 8 – Social Studies

The **academic expectation** addressed by the open-response item “Uniforms” is

- 2.14 Students should understand the democratic principles of justice, equality, responsibility, and freedom and apply them to real-life situations.

The **core content** addressed by this item includes:

- SS-M-1.1.2 Democratic governments function to preserve and protect the rights (e.g., voting), liberty, and property of their citizens by making, enacting, and enforcing appropriate rules and laws (e.g., constitutions, laws, statutes).
- SS-M-1.3.1 The United States Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and state constitutions guarantee certain rights (e.g., freedom of movement and residence, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and association, personal privacy) for all citizens.

Uniforms

Many public schools are debating whether students should be required to wear uniforms.

- Discuss **two pros** and **two cons** of requiring school uniforms.
- Explain how requiring uniforms relates to students’ First Amendment rights.



SCORING GUIDE

Grade 8 Social Studies

Score	Description
4	Student clearly discusses two pros and two cons of requiring school uniforms. Student clearly explains the relationship between this issue and an individual's constitutional rights under the First Amendment.
3	Student generally discusses two pros and two cons (one pro or con may be missing) of requiring school uniforms. Student generally explains the relationship between this issue and an individual's constitutional rights under the First Amendment.
2	Student discusses two pros, two cons, or one pro and one con of requiring school uniforms in a limited manner. Student provides a limited explanation of the relationship between this issue and an individual's constitutional rights. OR Student discusses two pros and two cons (one pro or con may be missing) of requiring school uniforms in a limited manner.
1	Student minimally discusses one pro and/or one con of wearing school uniforms. OR Student minimally relates this issue to an individual's constitutional rights.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Examples

Pros:

- decreases economic/social differences
- decreases teasing and ridiculing of students
- increases student safety
- improves academic performance
- promotes good conduct
- promotes school unity, pride
- students will spend less on "in" clothes
- eliminates offensive dress
- teachers won't have to enforce dress codes
- easier to get dressed in the morning
- harder to hide weapons in uniforms

Cons:

- less able to express their individuality
- some families might not be able to afford uniforms
- may interfere with some students' religious beliefs, practices
- will make students resentful, rebellious
- over-regulation of students

Relationship to First Amendment:

- uniforms may limit students' right of self-expression
- uniforms may limit the right to free speech (e.g., slogans on T-shirts)
- uniforms may limit religious rights of those who dress according to the precepts of their faith



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 8 Social Studies

Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

a) One advantage of requiring school uniforms is giving a better sense of unity within a school. This could cause some degree of better working within the classroom and on school-sponsored events. Also, a required uniform can get rid of inappropriate clothing worn by some students when any clothes are allowed. However, uniforms can make students feel isolated and restricted on various other things as well, perhaps causing some stress and more difficulty with work. Similarly, a uniform could make students more likely to try and express feelings, likely negative, through something different from clothing. Already, people—students included—use clothing as a method of expressing emotions.

b) Perhaps requiring a school uniform is a violation of part of students' First Amendment rights; many believe that through limiting selection of clothing, their rights of freedom of speech or religion or whatever are violated. Clothes can very well be used as a form of speech and expressing religion. It is difficult to weigh students' rights against clothing—which side can be stronger, no one knows.

← Student clearly discusses two pros of requiring students to wear uniforms in school (i.e., requiring uniforms may create a sense of school unity and may eliminate the use of inappropriate clothing).

← Student clearly discusses two cons of requiring students to wear school uniforms (i.e., requiring uniforms could make students feel restricted, causing them some stress, and could result in students expressing negative feelings in other ways).

← Student clearly explains how requiring school uniforms relates to students' First Amendment rights (i.e., such a requirement may violate the rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion).

Overall, the student shows a solid understanding of how the democratic principles of freedom, such as the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, relate to the real-life situation of schools requiring school uniforms. The student clearly discusses two pros and two cons of requiring school uniforms and clearly explains how requiring school uniforms relates to students' First Amendment rights.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 8 Social Studies

Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

Personally, I don't think we should have school uniforms but they are good in some ways. For example, most likely if a stranger came in your school, you would know because he would be the only one wearing jeans or something other than a solid collared shirt. It is also good because if someone came to school with an outlandish outfit on then everyone would be talking about it all day. But if you had uniforms everyone would look the same.

But, I think there are many cons! For example, students' parents would have to buy their school clothes plus summer and weekend clothes. Another negative thing is that if students couldn't express their individuality through their clothing, they would want to rebel in other ways. So then, they might start committing crimes or vandalizing or something else much worse than wearing a pair of sagging jeans and a shirt that doesn't have a collar.

This affects students' amendment rights because most of them don't know but they have the right to gather together in a school board meeting peaceably and that they have a freedom of speech. So they may speak for or against the uniforms.

← Student clearly discusses two pros of requiring students to wear uniforms in school (i.e., it would be easier to distinguish strangers in a school from the regular school population, and students wouldn't spend all day talking about someone's "outlandish outfit").

← Student clearly discusses two cons of requiring students to wear uniforms in school (i.e., parents would have to buy "school clothes plus summer and weekend clothes," and students who couldn't express themselves through their clothes may rebel in other ways).

← Student clearly explains how requiring school uniforms relates to students' First Amendment rights (i.e., students can "speak for or against the uniforms" because they have the "right to gather together" and they have "a freedom of speech").

Overall, the student shows a solid understanding of how the democratic principles of freedom, such as the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, relate to the real-life situation of schools requiring school uniforms. The student clearly discusses two pros and two cons of requiring school uniforms and clearly explains how requiring school uniforms relates to students' First Amendment rights.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 8 Social Studies

Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

Student Response

A. Many public schools are debating whether students should be required to wear uniforms.

I think that uniforms could have strong points, as well as weak points. One good result of uniforms would be, that no one would feel jealous or envious of a type of clothing that a peer is wearing. Uniforms would help to stop the violence (over clothes) in some schools. If uniforms were required, a lot of money would be saved from buying normal clothes.

On the other hand, many students feel that it is their choice to wear what they want - to express themselves. Uniforms wouldn't be a great idea for students who feel strongly about what they wear, and how they express themselves. Another reason why uniforms wouldn't be such a good idea is the idea that they just don't want to wear them. Some students just do not want to wear uniforms.

B. Requiring students to wear school uniforms, relates to students' First Amendment rights. The students' First Amendment rights are to be a free person, to be able to decide for yourself what to wear - and how to express yourself. Which means that students should not have to wear uniforms if they don't want to.

← Student clearly discusses one pro of requiring school uniforms (i.e., could help eliminate negative feelings and reactions, such as jealousy and violence, about peers' clothing) and generally states another pro (i.e., "a lot of money would be saved from buying normal clothes").

← Student clearly discusses one con of requiring school uniforms (i.e., could limit some students' self-expression) and attempts to discuss another con (i.e., students "just don't want to wear them"), but the reasoning is limited.

← Student generally explains how requiring school uniforms relates to students' First Amendment rights (i.e., the First Amendment rights include the right of being able to "decide for yourself...how to express yourself").

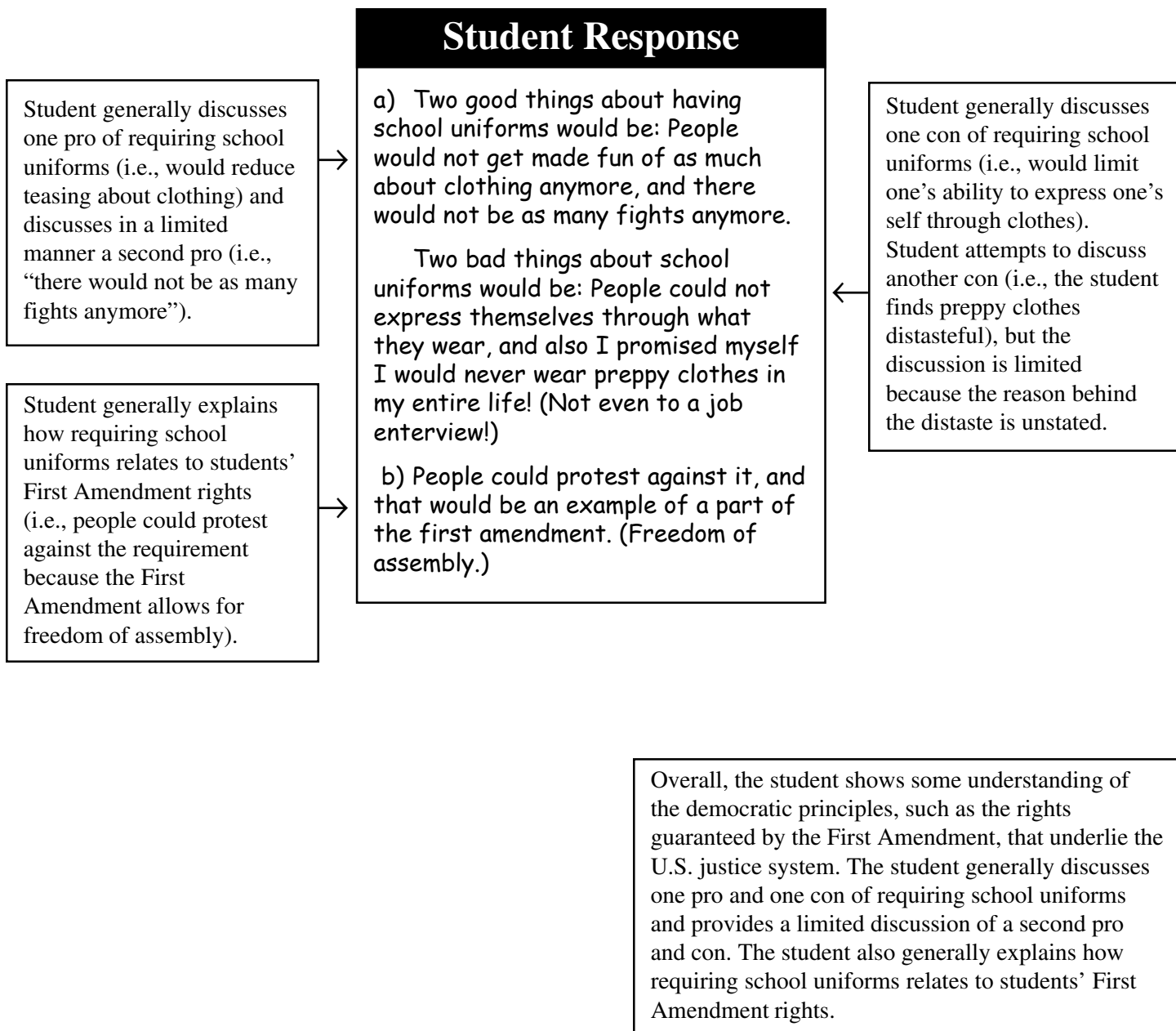
Overall, the student shows a general understanding of how the democratic principles of freedom, such as the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, relate to the real-life situation of schools requiring school uniforms. The student clearly discusses one pro and one con of requiring school uniforms, generally states another pro, and attempts to discuss another con. The student also generally explains how requiring school uniforms relates to students' First Amendment rights.



ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 8 Social Studies

Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

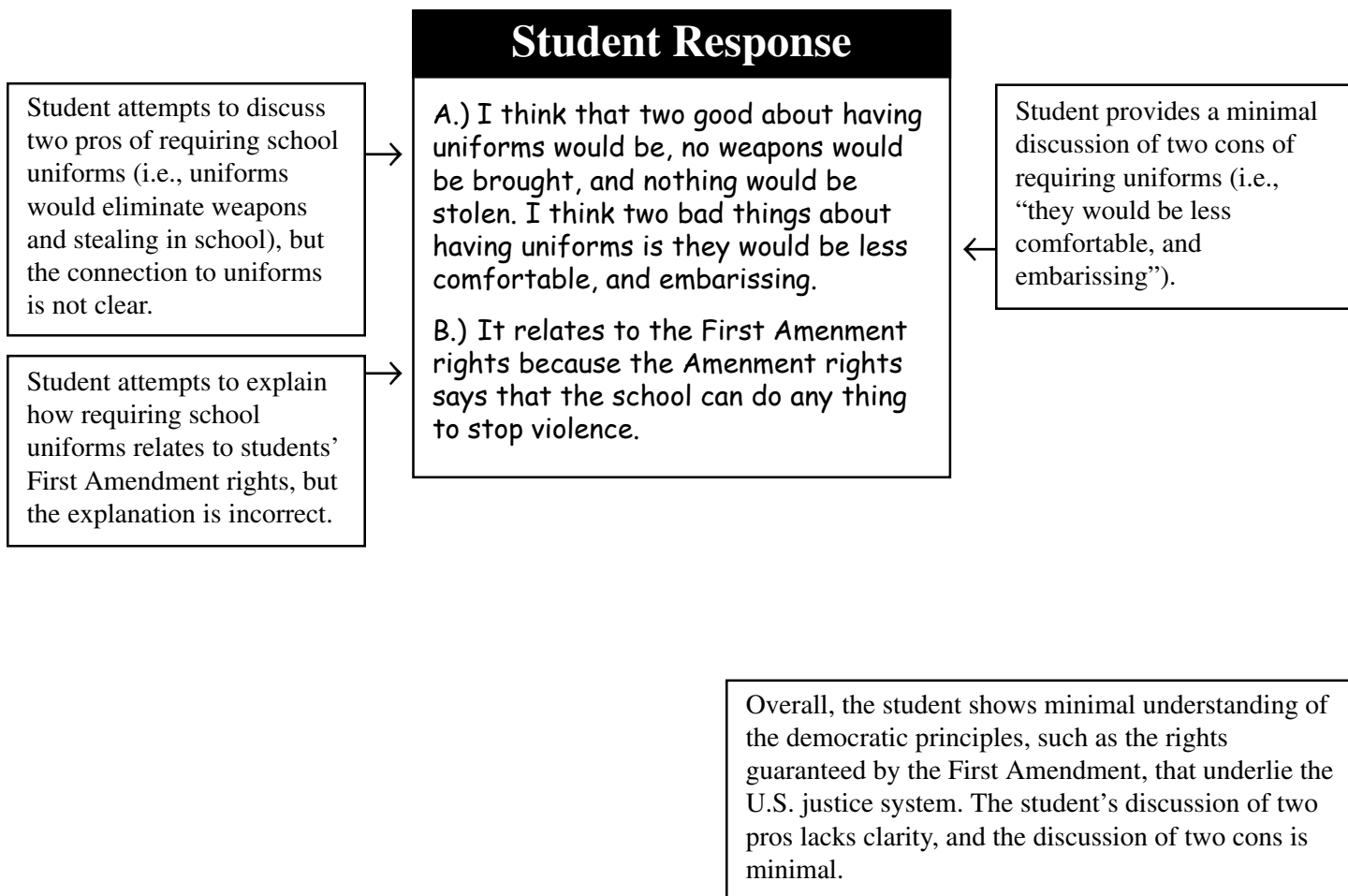




ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

Grade 8 Social Studies

Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work





INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Grade 8 Social Studies

The open-response item “**Uniforms**” was designed to address students’ (1) understanding of the Bill of Rights and of the democratic principles of justice, equality, responsibility, and freedom, and (2) ability to apply that knowledge to a real-life situation. The instructional strategies below present ideas for helping students explore and master these concepts and skills.

Provide opportunities for students to work individually, in pairs, in small groups, and/or as a class to complete (with teacher guidance and support) any or all of the following activities:

- Brainstorm reasons they would support or oppose uniforms in their school.
- Interview parents, community members, business leaders, school staff, and local board members to get their viewpoints on school uniforms.
- Survey other students in the school about their viewpoints on uniforms. Ask students if they use their clothes to express themselves and, if so, how.
- Use a spreadsheet program to compile information from surveys and interviews into graphs.
- Research the First Amendment and discuss the Supreme Court case, *Tinker vs. Des Moines School District*, concerning student expression at school. Conduct a mock trial reenacting the Tinker case.
- Write editorials for the local or school paper on this topic. If this topic is being discussed by the school council, students could write a letter to council members expressing their opinions. Another option would be to write a feature article for the school paper reporting the information gathered from research. Students should read models of “defend a position” or persuasive pieces before they are expected to write them.